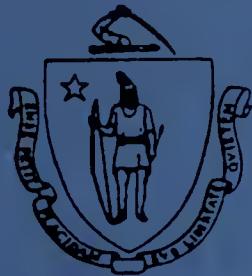


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# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts



**Department  
of Education**

## **GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS**

Revised, 1993

Office of Community Education

932/233

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**Publication No. 17286. Approved by Philmore Anderson, III, State Purchasing Agent**

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# **GUIDELINES FOR**

# **SCHOOL-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS**

**(Revised, 1993)**

**Developed by**  
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## Guidelines for School-Business Partnerships

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# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education

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1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169-5183

**March, 1993**

### ***From the Commissioner***

School-business partnerships in Massachusetts are among the most enlightened, progressive models of collaboration for school improvement in the country. We can take pride in the fact that school and business partners have worked together over the last decade to expand the definition of partnerships to include a broad range of approaches to strengthening learning for students, enhancing and upgrading the preparation and training of the educator workforce, addressing the management and facilities needs of school districts, and focusing on meaningful and systemic reform for schools.

Partnerships in this state are demonstrating that educators, business people, parents, and others in the community can effectively collaborate to identify, organize, and implement strategies and programs that result in mutual benefits for students, business and industry, families, and communities. The Department of Education is committed to continuing to build on the creativity, energy, and resources that partnerships are bringing to schools. We applaud the many individuals in the school and business community who are relentlessly expanding the boundaries of partnerships and providing a beacon for others who seek to enjoy the tangible benefits of collaboration.

These guidelines draw on the lessons of effective school-business practitioners in order to demonstrate the basic elements that contribute to effective partnerships. We hope you find these suggestions useful and that they provide you with ideas and enthusiasm for expanding business involvement in strengthening student learning in your schools.

*Robert V. Antonucci*  
Robert V. Antonucci  
Commissioner



## Guidelines for School-Business Partnerships

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### INTRODUCTION

**School-Business Partnerships** is a catch-all phrase that is used to encompass a vast range of collaborative efforts involving schools, businesses, and community organizations. These partnerships are found across the United States in large and small communities and are supported by national and state business, education, and governmental associations and organizations.

The decade of the 1980's provided momentum and growth to the partnership movement. In 1983, President Reagan launched the National Partnerships in Education Program. In November of 1984, the United States Department of Education reported that over 46,000 public-private sector partnerships had been identified in the 50 states. In this survey, Massachusetts ranked second, after California, with over 3,000 partnerships. By 1990, it was estimated that the number of partnerships in Massachusetts had doubled, based on national surveys and the experience of the Massachusetts Department of Education.

The Massachusetts School-Business Partnership Committee, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Education, Office of Community Education, plays a major role in promoting innovative, effective approaches to involving business and industry in systemic school improvement. In 1987 the Committee developed a Model for Successful Industry-Education Partnerships which can be found in Appendix A. This model incorporates the elements that are necessary to ensure that a partnership has a solid foundation and will endure the test of time.

The suggestions and examples in this publication reflect the Committee's vision for enlightened, progressive business involvement in educational reform. They also reflect the focus that the Committee and Department of Educa-

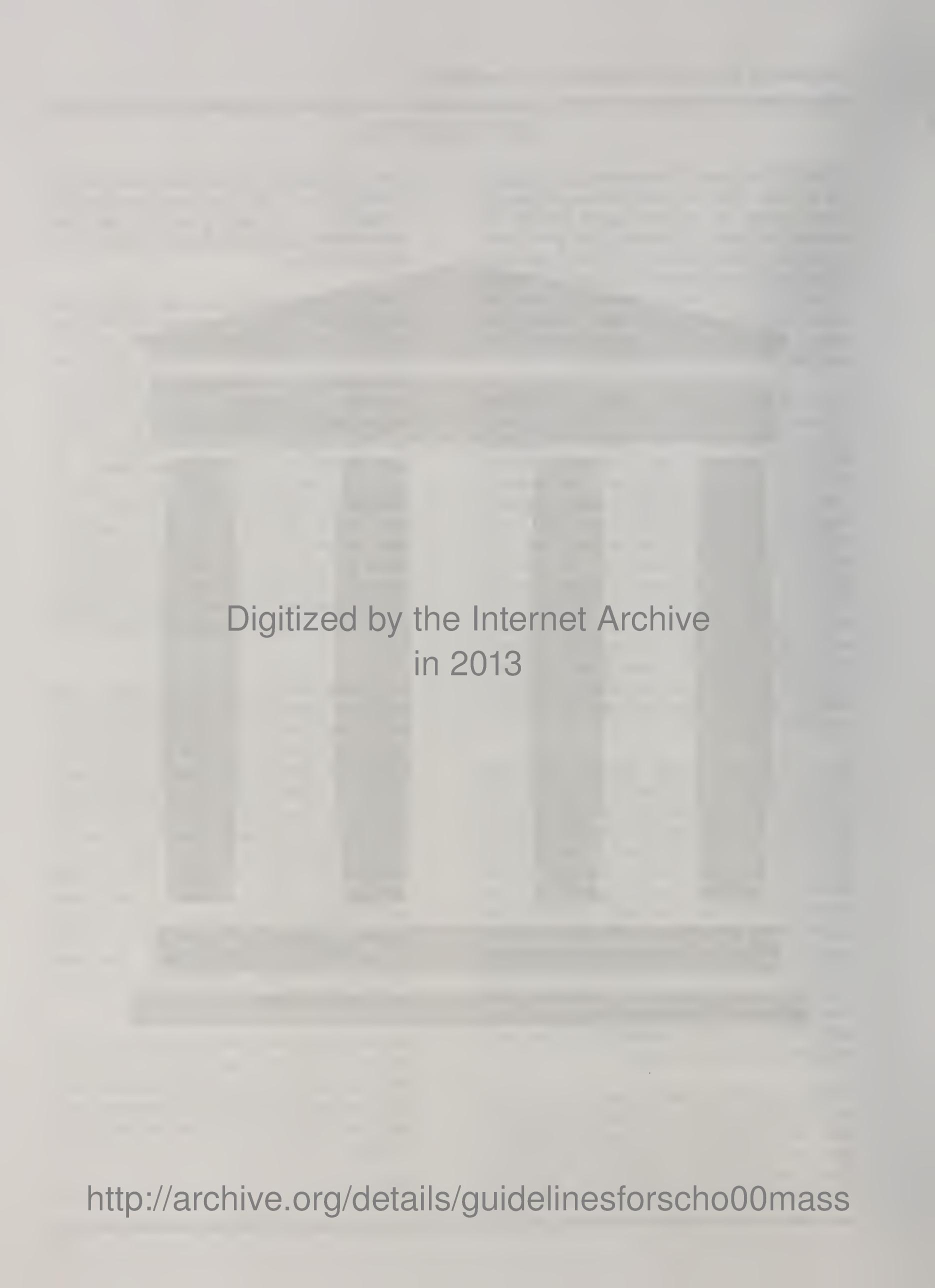
tion have taken in their research, policy development, and technical assistance initiatives. A listing of the current committee can be found in the front of this handbook.

This handbook, which was initially developed in 1985, has been updated to reflect the expanded role that partnerships are playing in educational improvement. It provides individuals in schools, businesses, and community organizations with basic information on the essential elements of partnership initiation and management. It outlines strategies that will help in avoiding some of the problems that may have derailed previous partnership efforts. It also provides suggestions for involving business and community representatives in systemic school reform that can have a lasting impact on children and their communities.

**SECTION ONE** of the handbook provides an introduction which describes the organizational structures and activities of school-business partnerships. **SECTION TWO** reviews steps that have proven successful in initiating and maintaining partnerships. **SECTION THREE** discusses strategies for avoiding some of the problems that can arise in partnership development. **SECTION FOUR** contains a listing of useful materials that address a range of partnership issues. **Appendix A** provides a model for partnership development that can be used to initiate, strengthen, or redirect partnerships.

School-business partnerships are the result of a judicious blend of good intentions, good communications, and self-interest. We hope this booklet will help you find the mix that works best for you.

Good Luck!



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## Guidelines for School-Business Partnerships

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This handbook provides a brief introduction to School-Business Partnerships. "Partnerships" are mutually beneficial collaborative efforts that bring educators, business people, and others in the community together to address their interest in strengthening the schools. The focus of their collaboration usually encompasses students' learning, strengthening the educator workforce, school management, and school improvement and reform. There are many successful partnerships in Massachusetts that are making a difference for students, teachers, school administrators, parents, employers, and others in the community. In preparing this handbook, we have drawn on the experiences of past and present partnership efforts to suggest guidelines for future programs.

The main topics covered by this handbook are:

### **What Are Partnerships and How Do They Work?**

Partnerships are ongoing relationships, supported by top-level leaders of the schools, businesses, and other organizations involved. They range from simple one school/one business relationships to complex consortia of partners that are coordinated by full-time administrators. Partnership activities include traditional and time-honored activities such as career awareness and tutor/mentor programs and in recent years have expanded to encompass professional development for teachers, systemic school improvement efforts, and advocacy for school reform.

### **Why Do Schools and Businesses Form Partnerships?**

For educators, the primary motivation for partnership activities is to improve

the ability of schools to meet the educational needs of children. This goal may be achieved directly through addressing students' individual learning needs, strengthening the educator workforce, providing the needed educational technology, and expanding linkages between the classroom, the workplace, and communities. For business people, partnerships are responses to a variety of concerns that range from the need for more highly skilled and motivated workers to the desire to contribute to the quality of life in the community. All parties should expect to derive short-term results and long-term benefits from partnership programs.

### **How Do Partnerships Get Started?**

Partnerships usually begin when an individual, either in a school, business, or community setting, is motivated to explore the idea of school-business collaboration. This individual then identifies and makes an initial contact with a school or industry representative. These individuals, and others as appropriate, then engage in a process of information sharing and relationship building that leads to the development of a set of shared values, trust, and respect.

### **What Is Required to Maintain a Partnership?**

Successful partnerships have well-defined missions, goals, and priorities that are established in a systematic fashion. They maintain good communication among the partners, identify tasks and responsibilities for program implementation, continually review and revitalize their programs, express appreciation for partners' contributions, and maintain effective public relations.

**What Are the Keys to Partnership Success?**

Successful partnerships include both "top-down" and "bottom-up" support and involvement from all parties. Partners are realistic about the time and resources needed for their activities, maintain open and ongoing communication, develop clear and flexible goals and objectives, and are responsive to the needs and interests of all involved.

**What Resources Exist for Partnerships?**

Partnerships are discussed in more detail in the pages that follow. The last section of this handbook includes a listing of publications on many aspects of school-business collaboration.

## I. Overview of Partnerships

### A. What Are School-Business Partnerships?

School-business partnerships are collaborative efforts that bring together people in schools, businesses, and other community organizations to address their mutual interest in strengthening education for children in their community. These partnerships are organized to create benefits for all of the parties involved.

For decades, there has been business involvement in the schools through career awareness and vocational education programs and through participation on school committees and boards. In the 1980's and 1990's this involvement has evolved and expanded to involve a broader spectrum of players in diverse approaches to school improvement.

Partnership programs are the result of collaborative decision making which is characterized by the following qualities:

- o Identification of mutual goals
- o Openness and trust among the partners
- o Equal participation and involvement by the planning partners
- o Broad-based participation in a planning process that values the people who will be involved in program implementation
- o Clear understandings about the management and coordination of the partnership
- o Ongoing evaluation and revitalization of the partnership and its programs

### B. Who Are the Partners?

Partnership programs are planned by and for a broad range of school, business and community representatives,

including many of the people who will be affected by the programs:

- o Superintendents, school administrators, teachers, students
- o Business executives, managers, employees
- o Chamber of Commerce executives and other civic and municipal leaders
- o Parents
- o Senior citizens and retirees
- o College and university faculty and administration
- o Labor representatives
- o Social and community agency staff

There is great diversity in the size and composition of partnerships. This variety is suggested in the following examples:

- o One school + one company
- o One school district + one company
- o One school + several companies
- o Several school districts + one company
- o Several school districts + several companies
- o Schools + companies + colleges and universities
- o School + companies + higher education + cultural and civic organizations
- o School + companies + higher education + governmental agencies + community organizations

### C. What Are the Activities?

Many partnerships start with programmatic activities that focus on enhancing student learning, awareness of career opportunities, and transitions to the world of work. Having developed an understanding of the operations and

structure of schools, many of these partnerships move into programming that addresses the professional development of the educator workforce. Increasingly, partnerships are also responding to the management and organizational needs of school administrators. The leading edge of school-business collaboration has been moving in this decade into the area of educational reform and restructuring, with informed business people taking the lead in pressing for legislative action on educational reform and equitable educational funding.

### **1. Student-focused Programs**

Business people's involvement in partnerships is often motivated by their desire to strengthen the workforce of the future. Their involvement in partnerships grows out of their desire to make a difference for young people by the following:

- o Expanding their awareness of the range of jobs and career opportunities that will be available in the next century.
- o Increasing their understanding of the skills and attitudes that will be required for these jobs and careers.
- o Enhancing students' self-confidence in their ability to succeed in school, among their peers, and in the workplace.
- o Demonstrating that there are caring, adult role models in business who have met the same challenges that are facing young people today.

These programs may include some of the following activities:

- o Individual and group tutoring for students by business people.
- o Mentoring programs for students with special interests or with special social and emotional needs.

- o Career awareness programs that include visits to and shadowing experiences in corporate and industrial settings.
- o Workshops on career exploration, job applications, and interviewing skills.
- o Programs on leadership development.
- o Internships and summer jobs for students that provide skill development, employment experiences, and career exploration.
- o Academic enrichment programs, especially in areas such as math and science, computer literacy, and oral and written communications.
- o Opportunities to use up-to-date equipment that builds needed skills and illustrates their relevance to the workplace.

### **2. Professional Development for Teachers and Administrators**

School-business partnerships can help to address the professional development needs of teachers and administrators through updating and renewing specific skills areas and providing training on academic and organizational issues. Partnerships are also enabling educators to interact with business people in programs that expand their ability to make connections for their students between classroom learning and the world of work.

These programs can include:

- o Skill renewal, expansion, and development workshops.
- o Career and employment awareness workshops.
- o Curriculum development teams that bring together school and business staff.
- o Summer employment in business.
- o Faculty externships in the private and non-profit sectors.

- o School-business employee exchanges.
- o Scholarships, grants, and sabbaticals for further training.

### **3. *School Management***

Strategic planning, school-based management, continuous improvement, management information systems, employee motivation and supervision, and facilities management are but a few of the increasingly pressing areas for school administrators. Business people, who are often contending with similar problems, have a great deal of expertise and experience to share with educators in these areas. The following list suggests some of the areas in which school-business partners are working together to address these concerns:

- o Developing, administering, and evaluating needs assessments for school systems.
- o Developing approaches for long and short range planning.
- o Sharing expertise on approaches to quality and continuous improvement.
- o Providing management training for administrators and school staff.
- o Consulting on management information needs and resources.
- o Sharing professional information.
- o Designing energy conservation and building maintenance programs.
- o Consulting on decentralized approaches to school-based management.

### **4. *Community Involvement in and Advocacy for Public Education***

Some partnerships are oriented toward making their communities better places to live and learn. In addition to their educational activities, they are interested in affecting the quality of life in their communities. Partnerships also are

assuming responsibility for building citizen and governmental support for educational improvement.

At both the local and the state levels, business people and educators are collaborating to promote the following recommendations:

- o Encourage citizen participation in the schools through promoting corporate volunteer programs, release time for employees, employee exchange programs, and involvement on school boards and advisory committees.
- o Encourage employees to volunteer in their children's schools.
- o Make schools and business facilities more available to local citizens for educational, recreational and leisure time activities.
- o Assist corporate executives in understanding school budgets, the need for budget override referenda, and supplemental budgets.
- o Facilitate citizen understanding of the schools by sponsoring school newspapers and letters to the community.
- o Promote community-wide programs that foster respect for and understanding of the schools.

### **5. *Donations of Equipment and Material Resources***

The donation of equipment and other resources is rarely an initial component of a successful partnership. In fact, partnerships that start on this basis seldom develop into long-term collaborative relationships. As school-business partnerships mature and the partners come to know and trust each other, however, they often come to appreciate each other's needs and resources. When partnership activity includes the transfer or loan of technology or equipment, it is done as part of a thoughtful, ongoing

plan to strengthen and expand school programming. This plan also includes training, maintenance, and support to maximize the impact of this new technology.

## **6. *Programs that Benefit Businesses and their Employees***

Many partnerships find creative ways to address some of the immediate, specific needs of business partners. While the resulting activities are rarely stated in the mission of the partnership, they are often the outcome of discussions that generate serendipitous and unexpected resource exchanges for the partners. Some of the following programs for businesses and their employees have come about in this way:

- o Company employees have used school equipment after school hours to learn word processing and other related technological skills.
- o Teachers have provided skills training to company employees on oral and written presentations.
- o Employee exchanges among teachers and managers have resulted in better understanding of each other's job and ways that they can support each other's work.
- o School auditoriums, classrooms, and cafeterias have been used for business meetings and retreats.
- o School athletic facilities have been made available as employee "health clubs."
- o College counselors from the high school have given information to company employees on college admissions and financial aid programs.

## **D. How Do Partnerships Function?**

The key to the successful functioning of school-business partnerships lies in the involvement of people from all levels of the participating organizations. Chief

executive officers and superintendents, managers and administrators, employees and teachers, college and university faculty and staff, community and municipal leaders, citizens, parents, and students contribute to designing, planning, implementing and evaluating the partnership's programs. The specific models that partnerships use to identify their direction and policies, coordinate their activities, and obtain any needed funding may vary according to the history and needs of the partnership.

### **1. *Partnership Governance***

Board of Directors  
Steering Committee  
School-Business Partnership Advisory Committee  
Education Committee

Responsibility for coordinating the goals and direction of the partnership usually rests with a formal group, which could be known by any one of the above names. This body generally meets periodically to keep informed on the partnership's activities, review its finances and management, and approve new areas of involvement for the partnership. It is in these meetings that the support of each organization is expressed and exemplified. It is also within this group that there is the opportunity to share concerns, needs, and "wish lists" regarding issues and problems that the partnership could address.

Partnerships involving small numbers of participants may choose to operate in an informal manner. The executives of the organizations, or their designees, are in close and frequent contact and may bring together the board of directors only a few times a year. Larger, more complex partnerships generally meet monthly or bi-monthly, with all of the executive leaders in attendance. Many of these governing boards incorporate and

become legal entities. These larger partnerships may also decide to establish a policy-level board that meets quarterly and a "practitioners" advisory board that meets monthly or more often as a working team to provide guidelines to the partnership coordinator.

## **2. Partnership Management**

Most boards, committees, or councils designate a coordinator to provide the day to day leadership for the partnership. Coordinators sometimes are school or business employees who are given release time to undertake this responsibility. They also may be affiliated with a chamber of commerce, university, other community organization or parent group and serve on a volunteer or stipended basis.

## **3. Time Commitment**

Because the management of a partnership is time-consuming, the activities of the partnership will be more successful if the coordinator has the time to attend to them. The coordinator position may be full or part-time. When existing personnel are assigned to the partnership, this responsibility should be written into the position description and adequate time made available.

## **4. Co-Coordinators**

Some partnerships have co-coordinators, with one person representing the school and the other representing a company, a coalition of businesses, or a civic organization.

## **5. Office Location**

Coordinators generally are located at the school, the business site, or a community location, such as the Chamber of Commerce or an other civic organization. When coordinators are located in a non-

school site, they usually are in close contact with an individual in the school, frequently an administrator, who oversees the programmatic aspects of the partnership.

## **6. Coordinator Compensation**

Most coordinators are paid. Their school or company job description has been revised to encompass their partnership responsibilities. This kind of support for the partnership is often considered an "in-kind" contribution. Some coordinators receive minimal compensation in the form of a stipend. Partnerships also seek support for the coordinator through fund raising and grants.

## **7. Partnership Funding**

As with the other components of partnership management, partnerships handle their finances in different ways. Many partnerships operate with few or no identifiable expenses, except for the coordinator's salary. In these partnerships, the school and business participants each absorb the costs they incur, such as printing, copying, postage, travel, and time. Some partnerships maintain a partnership fund, to which each partner contributes, to cover the expenses of the partnership. At the other end of the continuum are partnerships that raise substantial funds to finance the cost of staff, training for teachers, equipment purchases, and related expenses. These more heavily funded partnerships are sometimes managed through Chambers of Commerce and involve regional efforts. It should be noted, however, that not all partnerships involving Chambers of Commerce and other community organizations can be characterized as having extensive funding.

## E. Why Do Partners Become and Stay Involved?

The "bottom line" for business, educational and community leaders who become involved in partnerships is their organizations' self-interest. They each have different ways of measuring their success and different standards for judging their achievements. Most of these leaders understand that it takes time for a partnership to achieve results: time for the partners to develop trust in each other; time to understand each other's needs and constraints; and time to make a significant difference in the educational process. However, the "front end" enthusiasm that comes from working together on solutions to common problems and realizing short-term successes through partnership projects provides a foundation upon which to build further collaboration and from which to launch long-term projects.

### 1. Schools

Schools usually have clear expectations about the benefits of partnerships for their students and teachers: they anticipate expanded teaching and learning opportunities that result in improved student achievement. Often, however, there are unexpected outcomes that benefit the school system as a whole, such as improved school management and an enhanced public image for education in the community. School administrators who have on-going participation in partnerships express the following reasons for their involvement:

- o Skill development opportunities for teachers and students.
- o Career awareness and job exploration for students and teachers.
- o Expanded access to technology and to cutting-edge uses for technology.

- o Curriculum development, enhancement and enrichment.
- o Opportunities to maximize resources through access to business surpluses, discounts, and donations.
- o Improved teacher morale through business and citizen involvement and interest in the schools.
- o Assistance with school management systems.
- o Improved public relations and increased community support for schools.

### 2. Businesses

Many businesses enter into partnerships because of their concern about the shortage of skilled employees. A secondary reason for some businesses relates to their corporate image in the community. A common by-product for businesses is the personal satisfaction experienced by their employees who work with the schools. Business leaders have indicated the following benefits that they receive from their partnerships:

- o A continued pool of new employee who have skills and attitudes that will prepare them to be productive employees.
- o Reduced training costs and decreased employee turnover.
- o Opportunities to educate students and teachers about their industry, their company, and the free enterprise system.
- o Increase in employees' morale and job satisfaction through involvement with teachers and students in the schools.
- o Increased voice in educational decision making in the community.
- o Enhanced public image in their community and their industry through collaboration with the schools.

### **3. *Community Organizations***

Community organizations, such as colleges and universities, Chambers of Commerce, youth groups, service and civic groups, and social service agencies are often participants in, if not the initiators of, school-business partnerships. Motivated by improving the economic, educational, or social environment of the community, these organizations recognize partnerships as collaborative vehicles which help them to achieve their individual goals. In addition, there are benefits to each organization from its participation:

- o Enhanced opportunities to meet the organization's own goals through community-wide collaborative efforts that address the needs of overlapping constituencies and clienteles.
- o Demonstrations of commitment to community improvement.
- o Opportunities to link with the community's school and business leaders.
- o Input into educational and community decision making.
- o Increased public support for and awareness of its programs.
- o Improved public image.

School-business partnerships are generally grassroots efforts that develop in response to the local needs. Issues such as reducing the dropout rate, professional development of teachers, connecting the learning in classrooms with issues in the community and the world of work, and addressing the learning needs of all children require collaborative initiatives within communities.



## II. STEPS FOR DEVELOPING A PARTNERSHIP

Business people, educators, parents, and others in communities are taking the following steps to work together to engage human and material resources in the community in addressing issues of mutual concern.

### A. Initiate a Relationship

In many cases, the first step toward entering a partnership takes place over a fairly formal (and perhaps awkward) meeting, perhaps over breakfast or lunch, that involves representatives from the schools, the business community and the larger community. The catalyst for this meeting comes from a number of sources: the school superintendent, a business executive, a college administrator, a parent, or another community representative. This meeting may involve only a few individuals or it may include several people from each of the organizations that are possibly interested in implementing a partnership. Many school and business partners have reported that the biggest obstacle to getting involved in a partnership was taking the first step. The following suggestions may help:

#### 1. *Pick Up the Telephone*

Most partnerships can trace their beginnings to a phone call that one individual made to another. While there is no protocol for who should call whom, most business people and school officials report that they wait for someone else to take the first step. Once contacted, however, most school and business leaders are receptive and pleased to explore partnership possibilities. Reports on how partnerships get started contain a range of anecdotal information, such as descriptions of chance meetings, of capitalizing on personal, social, or community ties, and of "cold" calls that were pre-

ceded by crossed fingers and a deep breath. In some cases, community leaders have taken the initiative and served as catalysts.

#### 2. *Have a First Meeting*

The first meeting, whether in an office or over a meal, provides the participants with a preliminary opportunity to get to know each other and to assess the possibilities of working together. This meeting should be fairly relaxed, social, and unstructured. The sharing that comes from this meeting can form the basis for a second, more targeted meeting.

#### 3. *Explore Mutual Interests and Concerns*

Partnerships are dependent, in part, on relationships between people and on the establishment of trust. The first and subsequent exploratory meetings, whether attended by the top executives or their designated representatives, should allow for time to discuss the business perspective on schools, the assumptions that educators have about the business community, and the realities of the economic climate in the community. All sides must be prepared to listen with open minds. It may be that there are memories of unsuccessful previous endeavors and skeptical attitudes that need to be addressed. However, with the recognition that these are different times and there may be blame to be shared on all sides, most potential partners have been able to identify areas for further exploration. From this point, the group can proceed to work on some of the following areas:

- o Identifying common concerns and needs.
- o Developing a list of priorities.
- o Suggesting new programs or expansions of existing programs.

- o Identifying the resources that each party, and others to be identified, can bring to the relationship.

#### **4. *Expand the Group to Involve the Affected Constituencies***

Once it is clear that the group will be going forward, it is important to include representatives of all of the people who will be affected by the programs. Teachers, administrators, supervisors, employees, students and parents may be called upon to join the planning group and share their viewpoints and expertise. They will be helpful in pointing out pitfalls, communicating plans to their colleagues and peers, and developing internal and external support for the partnership's activities.

#### **B. Set Goals**

With the development of a trusting relationship and collegial spirit, many groups find they are ready to move forward with action. Executives in schools, businesses, and the community are goal oriented individuals who expect to see action and results promptly. Most partnerships find that they should establish simple short-term goals at first so that they will have achievements upon which to build. Also, they want to ensure that this new endeavor is not so large that it drains or depletes the energy and enthusiasm upon which it depends for its success. These goals may involve activities that will occur over the course of one semester or a few weeks. In time, longer range goals can be developed to indicate the partnership's direction, focus, and identity.

#### **C. Create a Management Structure**

Successful partnerships develop both

governance and organizational structures to enable them to maximize their productivity and effectiveness. Key leaders who represent the partners and who have the ability to generate and mobilize broad-based community involvement in the partnership should be recruited for an oversight board or advisory body. These leaders can help to guide the partnership's direction and ensure that it is responsive to existing and emerging educational needs in the community.

It is also critical to establish a sustainable organizational structure that identifies at least one key person who has the responsibility for coordinating and managing the partnership. In addition, the partnership should estimate the operational expenses that are anticipated and the resources that will support these expenses, real or in-kind. While this structure may be altered over time, it is important to be clear and specific on these issues in order to avoid misunderstanding from the start and to demonstrate the commitment that is being made to the partnership.

#### **D. Implement and Evaluate Quality Programs**

The thought and attention to detail that characterizes partnership programs will set a pattern for the partner relationships and will be a clear indicator of the integrity and quality of the partnership. Well-planned programs that demonstrate concern for the rights and sensitivities of all involved, and that build in clear and frequent communication, will be more likely to be well-received and effective.

##### **1. Planning**

A key to valuable programming is planning. Every aspect of programs should be scrutinized, so that every detail has

been accounted for and the unexpected has been anticipated. It also is important to prepare teachers, students, parents, business employees, and others who will be affected by partnership activities about upcoming and new programs. There are many guides available on orienting volunteers to schools and the classroom, preparing students for experiences in the community, and other strategies for effective programs. Some of these materials are listed in the Resources section at the end of this booklet.

## **2. *Recognition***

Participants in programs appreciate being recognized for their contributions of time, effort, and resources. Public recognition, in the local newspaper, school newsletters, corporate publications, on local cable television, and through other media vehicles, provides excellent opportunities for publicizing the good things that are happening in schools while giving recognition to the activities of businesses and community groups that are collaborating with the schools.

## **3. *Evaluation***

All partnerships benefit from thoughtful evaluation. Regardless of the apparent success or failure of programs, all partnerships should be prepared to use formal and informal evaluation methods as learning tools to help understand how programs, services, and activities can improve.

Be honest and open with the participating partners about programs that are less effective than hoped and use group meetings as opportunities to review problems and look for ways to make changes. Similarly, keep quantitative and qualitative records so that you can communicate effectively about your successes to others in the schools and the community.

Sharing this information may result in

gaining support for your activities and encouraging people to join your partnership. You may want to keep records on:

- o The number of individuals who participate in programs.
- o The number of different programs offered.
- o The number of school, community and business staff involved in implementing programs.
- o Favorable or unfavorable anecdotal comments on programs.
- o Summaries of program evaluations.
- o Representative quotes gleaned through written or oral evaluations of programs.
- o Representative quotes from business people, teachers, students, parents, and others who are familiar with or impacted by partnership activities.

## **E. Maintain and Sustain Partnerships**

Partnerships are like other relationships: They are at risk of becoming stale or dissolving. Partnerships should be viewed as living organisms that need careful feeding and nurturing in order to ensure their healthy growth. Because nothing in the world stands still, partnership programs need to be frequently updated and expanded. To avoid partnership "burn-out," consider the following ideas:

- o Rotate members of partnership steering committees to relieve schools and companies of extended commitments.
- o Rotate guest speakers, mentors, tutors, and others who may tend to get into - and resent - an annual commitment to the program.
- o Always seek new business and community representatives for membership on your committees in order to get new ideas and perspectives.

- o Continually show appreciation for and recognition of the people who are making a contribution to your partnership.
- o Acknowledge all partnership participants at least once a year.
- o Beg, borrow and steal ideas for new programs, creative solutions to business and school problems, and ways to keep the community aware of your activity.

These strategies are just a beginning toward ensuring the continued success and growth of your partnership. The Resources section at the end of this booklet lists publications which have additional ideas.

#### **F. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate**

Throughout this section the importance of public relations has been mentioned. However, it bears repeating. Communication is one of the major tasks of the coordinator and is critical to providing awareness, support, and renewal for partnerships and their programs. There are very few companies that do not want to be recognized, by citizens and by their professional colleagues, for the role they are playing in the schools. There are fewer schools that do not want the public to know that they are collaborating with the private sector to enhance the educational opportunities of their students. Also, citizens and parents want to know about the exciting programs that are happening in their schools.

Publicity about programs stimulates new companies to participate, encourages reluctant educators to get on the bandwagon, encourages parents and other citizens to think about how they could share their expertise with the schools, and lets the program participants know

how much they are appreciated. Public relations breeds ideas for new programs, volunteers, donations, and taxpayer interest in the schools.

Good partnerships have good public relations. The following ideas provide a sampling of vehicles for getting the word out on partnership projects and on the ways in which businesses and the community are supporting the schools:

- o Place articles about new partnership activities in local, school and company newspapers.
- o Secure media coverage of your events that honor or recognize local business people and dignitaries.
- o Use local access cable television to demonstrate partnerships at work and to highlight corporate volunteers.
- o Publicize corporate support of local school budgets and legislation through local media and bulletins to parents.
- o In all media communications, invite interested people to join the partnership. Don't forget to include a telephone number!

### **III. STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS**

**School-business partnerships are similar in many ways to other collaborative relationships in which you and your organization may have been involved. Many of the same guidelines that facilitate other ongoing cooperative relationships apply to partnerships. There are, however, some suggestions that are specific to the success and productivity of school-business partnerships.**

#### **A. Overcome Misconceptions**

**Most new partnerships experience some difficulties because of preconceived ideas that people from business and education have about each other. Some of the widely-held views on each side can be seen in the following stereotypes:**

##### **Stereotypes About Educators**

- o Disinterested in business
- o Suspicious of the motivation of business people
- o Insulated from the local community
- o Looking for handouts from business
- o Resistant to being held accountable for educational outcomes

##### **Stereotypes About Business People**

- o Lacking an understanding of the new social and demographic pressures on schools
- o Impatient with the educational bureaucracy
- o Overly focused on "work and business related" skills
- o Viewing schools as developing a "product" for business

**Historically, it may be understandable that these perceptions have developed. Usually, however, they are based on misunderstandings.**

**For a partnership to function effectively, it is important that the participants are candid with each other. Differences in viewpoints should be recognized and discussed openly, with care taken to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect. Frank expression of different ideas and opinions can help partners to design programs that will serve the interests of all participants, meeting everyone's agenda. As partners come to know each other as individuals rather than just "businesspersons" or "educators," the stereotypical attitudes usually disappear.**

**The key to addressing misconceptions is communication. Some partnership practitioners have indicated that at least six months of getting acquainted time is necessary before the partners can be comfortable and open with each other. Opportunities to become acquainted can help to expedite the familiarization process:**

- o Dinner and luncheon meetings in which there is time for socializing as well as talking about goals.
- o Focused meetings held to determine each other's needs, limitations, expectations, and goals.
- o School and business events to which partners and potential partners are invited to increase their familiarity with each other's environment (awards dinners, special celebrations, etc.).
- o Visitation days to each other's institutions.
- o Joint participation in conferences, workshops, and seminars that are designed to promote expanded school-business understanding.

## B. Build "Top Down" Commitment

School-business partnerships must have visible, consistent, and enthusiastic support from the top executives in each participating organization in order to be successful. In addition, superintendents and chief executive officers should, if not able to participate directly in the partnership planning, appoint representatives who will be able to speak for them and for their organization in developing partnership policy and committing institutional resources.

In partnerships that involve small businesses and smaller school districts, the top executives may play an active participation role. In partnerships in which the organizational representative is not the superintendent or the CEO, it is important that there is good communication between the implementer and the top decision-maker so that expectations are met, commitments are upheld, and goals are understood and achieved.

In addition to top executive support, there are numerous institutional ways in which schools and businesses can indicate their commitment to the partnership. The following suggestions provide a few examples:

- o Provide employees with sufficient time to accomplish their partnership responsibilities.
- o Make partnership planning meetings and programmatic events a priority.
- o Publicize partnership activities.
- o Encourage other businesses and schools to participate in these or other partnerships.
- o Include partnership participation in employee evaluation.
- o Include partnership involvement in annual or year-end reports.

## C. Build "Bottom Up" Involvement

Effective partnerships have "top down" and "bottom up" involvement in the planning and implementing of partnership activities. Participation by all of the affected constituencies, such as the administrators, managers, supervisors, teachers, students, employees, and parents, serves the partnership well in several ways:

- o Provides opportunities for the affected constituencies to make suggestions about potential projects.
- o Allows the projects to reflect the concerns and perspectives of the affected constituencies.
- o Helps to develop a sense of ownership of, and enthusiasm for, the partnership
- o Facilitates communication of the goals and strategies of the planning team to co-workers.
- o Helps develop support for project implementation.

## D. Demonstrate Consideration of Partners' Time

People from large and small businesses, as well as from schools and the community, often have very limited time available for partnership meetings. People from small businesses, especially, may not have executives at their workplace who can "carry the ball" when they are away. Local merchants often have few people to "mind the shop" when they are not there.

Many school districts have had to eliminate some of the administrators who, in previous years, may have been available to support partnership activity. For these reasons, it is very important that those

who plan the meetings of partnership groups observe the following suggestions.

- o Prepare and distribute, in advance, an agenda for each meeting.
- o Include background materials with the agenda so that partners are prepared to discuss agenda items.
- o Do as much communicating as possible in writing, so that partners are able to keep updated "on their own time," when it is convenient for them. However, keep written communication as succinct and to the point as possible.
- o Keep meetings focused, on time, and productive. Do not do "committee" or detail work at meetings of the whole group. Try not to get side tracked on interesting but irrelevant issues.
- o Keep minutes of each meeting and distribute copies of the minutes to group members after each meeting.
- o Develop subcommittees of individuals who are available to deal with some of the time-consuming detail work of the partnership.

#### E. Establish the Partnership's Mission and Identity

Developing partnerships should create specific identities for themselves by focusing on particular activities. Some partnerships emphasize world-of-work awareness for students and teachers and develop curriculum approaches that reflect this focus. Others have chosen, for example, to provide skill renewal and professional development opportunities for teachers and put their energies into developing a range of professional development opportunities for school staff. In each case, the schools, businesses, and communities involved can put a "handle"

on the partnership. They have a conceptualization of their partnership which allows them to communicate about it to others, to "know what business they are in," and to develop short and long term goals that are focused on their partnership vision.

#### 1. *Short Term Goals*

Most successful school-business partnership start with concrete, short term goals that have a high likelihood of success. They develop projects which are enthusiastically subscribed to by their planning groups and which have the members' personal commitment. They have found that when the partners "buy into" the partnership's activities they work strenuously for its success. This sense of accomplishment, the group cohesiveness that results, and the opportunities for attracting new partnership participants serve to reinforce the appeal of the partnership and to maintain the group's energy and commitment. Success breeds success in partnerships - as in other endeavors.

#### 2. *Long Term Goals*

Partnerships rarely need 5 or 10 year plans. Long term planning generally means one or two years, and even these plans should be continuously reviewed and updated. While partnerships will want to develop a sense of where they are headed and potential areas for new programming, they will find that their constituencies are mostly interested in their action plans and their immediate impact. Successful partnerships keep their long range plans general, flexible, and in harmony with the short term programs and projects of the partnership.

#### F. Ensure Administrative Support

Partnership programs are generally "people-intensive." Recruiting, monitoring, servicing, and recognizing the program participants are vital to the smooth functioning of the partnership and they take a great deal of time. By overloading existing staff, a partnership can collapse of its own weight, leaving disappointed students and disillusioned partners. In planning for a partnership, therefore, it is important to delineate 1) the steps that need to be taken, 2) who will be responsible, and 3) the resources that will be needed. In addition, several understandings must be reached:

- o The level of participation by each partner
- o The resources each partner will contribute
- o The expenditures each partner will absorb

When these issues have been successfully resolved, there will be less likelihood that unrealistic expectations, resentment, or a feeling of inequity will intrude on the relationship. If problems arise, it will be necessary to have the group review the obligations and contributions of each partner, renegotiating the agreements if necessary.

#### G. Tie Funders to Planning and Programming

Many relationships between businesses and schools in the early 1970's focused on gifts of money and technology to schools. Rarely were the businesses a part of the planning for how or where the money or equipment was to be used. Such relationships typically ended after the "transfer" was complete. Another set of problems arose for programs that received initial funding and proceeded to build extensive organizations. When the

funding ran out, these programs had no experience in securing continuation money through vehicles such as grants or fund raising. These programs had large overhead costs which they could not sustain.

Most school-business partnerships in the 1990's are not heavily dependent upon funding and do not fall prey to the "money first" syndrome. Many successful and enduring partnerships have modest financial demands. It is very common for companies and schools to absorb many of their partnership-related expenses, such as time, printing, travel, postage, incidentals, and food for meetings. Some partnerships levy a modest yearly membership fee to cover the costs of the coordinator or to supplement the salary of an existing staff member. While there are significant costs associated with some programs, these costs are clearly defined and voluntarily assumed, with efforts made to assess them fairly over the participating organizations. In partnerships that are heavily dependent upon financial resources, fundraising mechanisms are developed as a part of the partnership plan, with the participation and support of all who are involved.

## **IV. RESOURCES**

**There are many excellent written resources that provide useful and creative suggestions for school-business partnership programming and for initiating and managing partnerships. The following lists present a wide variety of partnerships models and strategies that others have found successful. If related materials or organizations of which you are aware are not included here, kindly share that information with us by writing to:**

**Susan Freedman, Director  
Office of Community Education  
Massachusetts Department of Education  
1385 Hancock Street  
Quincy, Massachusetts 02169**

### **A. Publications**

**The Business Roundtable Participation Guide: A Primer for Business on Education**, New York: The Business Roundtable, 1990. A guide for business people that acquaints CEOs and their corporate staff with the challenges in education and the kinds of action that will be effective.

**Business-School Partnership: A Path to Effective School Restructuring**, Diane W. Ridgen, New York: Council for Aid to Education, 1991. Describes three models of partnership and applies them to school reform.

**Business and the Schools: A Guide to Effective Programs**, Diane W. Ridgen, New York: Council for Aid to Education, 1991. Profiles of effective school-business partnerships.

**A Blueprint for Business on Restructuring Education**, Washington, D.C.: National Alliance for Business, 1989. Focuses on the early steps businesses may want to take as they work with educators on school reform.

**The Business Role in State Education Reform**, New York: The Business Roundtable, 1990. Recommendations for how businesses can most effectively pursue their interests in education reform at the state level.

**Restructuring the Education System: Agenda for the 1990's**, Michael Cohen, Washington, D.C.: National Governors' Association, 1988. A succinct summary of the major issues in school reform.

**Innovation with Impact: Industry-Education Partnerships in Massachusetts**, Massachusetts Department of Education. Two directories that each describe approximately 100 school-business partnerships that are addressing a range of student and educator needs.

**How Are We Doing? A Guide to the Evaluation of School-Business Partnerships**, Massachusetts Department of Education, 1988. A primer on qualitative and quantitative approaches to partnership evaluation.

**Industry-Education Partnership: Massachusetts Case Studies**, Massachusetts Department of Education, 1987. Studies of 15 school-business partnerships that reflect a range of approaches to school improvement.

**Proceedings of the 1984 "Partners for Excellence" Conferences**, Massachusetts Department of Education. Profiles of 17 partnerships and suggested strategies for initiating and maintaining partnerships.

**Restructuring in Progress: Lessons from Pioneering Districts**, Jane David, Washington, D.C.: National Governors' Association, 1989. Profiles on pioneering school districts that are engaged in educational reform.

**Let's Not Reinvent the Wheel: Profiles of School-Business Collaboration**, Ian McNett (Ed.), Washington, D.C., Tilden Press, 1982. A publication of the Institute for Educational Leadership which provides a comprehensive introduction to partnerships.

**Hip Pocket Guide to Planning and Evaluation**, Dorothy B. Craig, 1978, University Associates, Inc., P.O. Box 26240, San Diego, CA 92126. A comprehensive and readable guide to evaluation.

**Company-School Collaboration: A Manual for Developing Successful Projects**, Education Services, American Council of Life Insurance, 1850 K Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20006. A complete and valuable guide to partnership development.

**Business and Education: Partners for the Future**, Chamber of Commerce of the United States, 1615 H. Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 1985. An introduction to industry-education partnerships.

**Partnerships in Education: A Handbook**, Pennsylvania Department of Education, Office of Basic Education, 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17108. A step-by-step guide to initiating partnerships.

**A Sure Bet: Business and Education Together**, A Handbook for Chamber of Commerce Education Committees, February, 1985, Education Department, California Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 1736, Sacramento, CA 95808. Practical suggestions for initiating and developing partnership programs, with an emphasis on the role of Chambers of Commerce.

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**B. Organizational Resources**

**National Alliance of Business (NAB)**  
1201 New York Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
(202) 289-2888

**Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG)**  
Suite 304, 1750 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
(202) 638-2958

**Council for Aid to Education**  
51 Madison Avenue, Suite 2200  
New York, NY 10010  
(212) 689-2400

**The Business Roundtable**  
200 Park Avenue  
New York, NY 10166  
(212) 682-6370

**Center for Policy Research**  
National Governors' Council  
444 North Capital Street  
Washington, D.C. 20001

**Junior Achievement, Inc.**  
550 Summer Street  
Stamford, CT 06902



## APPENDIX A

### A Model for Successful Industry-Education Partnerships

## APPENDIX A

### A MODEL FOR SUCCESSFUL INDUSTRY-EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

Industry-Education Partnerships at the most simple level are relationships between two parties, schools and businesses.

Schools     $\longleftrightarrow$     Businesses

These parties have a belief in the **value** of working together to achieve their common goals and a **vision** of what beneficial outcomes the partnership can produce.

Schools     $\xleftarrow{\text{Values}} \xrightarrow{\text{Vision}}$     Businesses

Successful relationships require that the partners put in the time and energy that allow them to come to know and trust each other. These partnerships also demonstrate the following elements:

**Commitment to the partnership goals:** All of the partners at all levels in their organizations are committed to making the partnership work and are willing to dedicate the required human and physical resources.

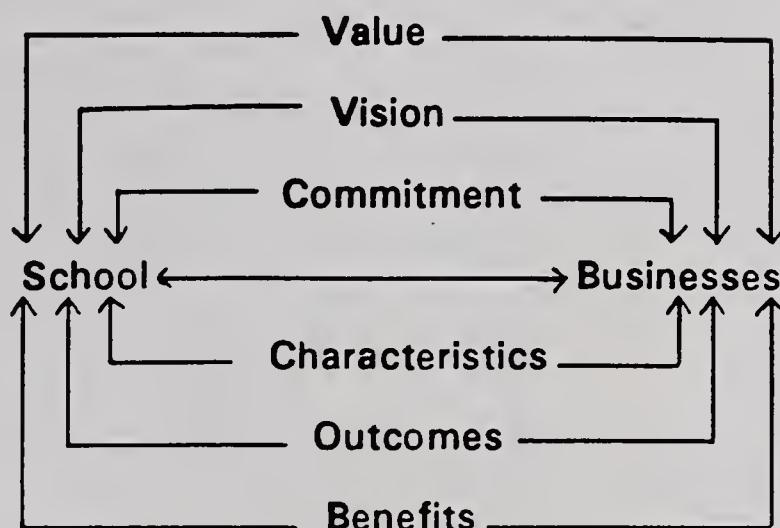
**Understanding of the characteristics of the partnership:** Partners are familiar with how the partnership is organized and coordinated, the channels of communication, and the role of any advisory boards.

**Agreement on the outcomes of the partnership:** The partners must know "what business they are in" and what the partnership can be expected to accomplish.

**Ability to articulate the benefits that the partners derive:** The partners are able to express their "bottom line," whether in long or short range terms. These benefits will vary among partners. In communicating the benefits they derive from the partnership, partners help others to understand their motivation for involvement.

These elements can be described as part of an ongoing process that contributes to the success of the partnership (Diagram A):

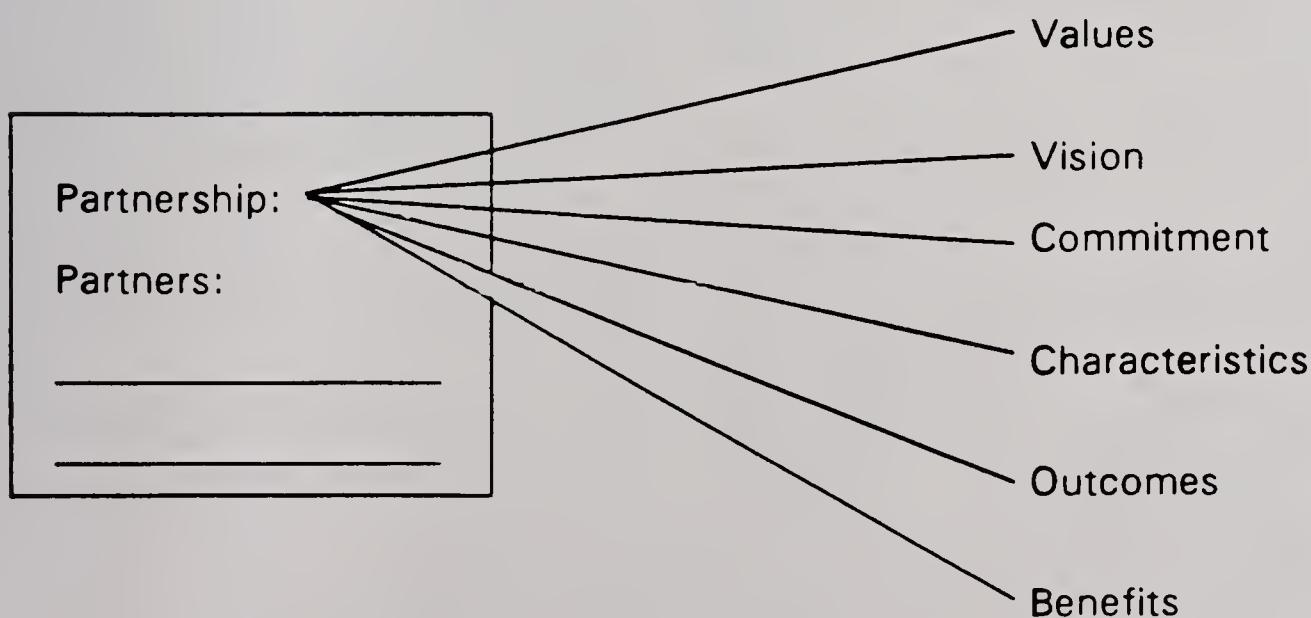
**Elements in a Successful Partnership**  
(Diagram A)



These elements can also be considered TOOLS that help the partners INITIATE, DEVELOP, REDIRECT, EVALUATE, AND DESCRIBE the partnership (Diagram B):

**A Model for Effective Partnership**  
(Diagram B)

**Elements**



By answering the questions "who," "what," "when," "where," and "why?" for each element, partnerships can be planned, described, expanded or evaluated. This simple tool has proven a useful device for organizing the information about a partnership into a system that is easily communicated and understood.





